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Subject: Tips From The Professor – Dr. Steven Chaney :

Omega-3s Protect Japanese from Heart Disease- Another Mystery Solved

Dr. Stephen Chaney is a frequent spokesman for health and nutrition issues. As a professor of biochemistry, biophysics and nutrition at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, he teaches nutrition to medical students and has conducted a cancer research project for nearly 30 years. His name is on over 80 published studies in peer-reviewed journals.

It's so tempting...

Men living in Japan have 1/2 the risk of heart disease compared to men living in the United States despite having adopted a mostly western lifestyle since World War II.

If you look at risk factors, Japanese men and US men have very similar serum levels of total cholesterol, blood pressure and rates of type 2 diabetes.

And Japanese men now have a much higher rate of smoking than US men.

It seems like they are doing everything wrong – but they still have a much lower risk of heart disease!

Actually, they are not doing everything wrong. They do eat a lot more fish than US men - and since those fish come from the Northern Pacific they are loaded with omega-3 fatty acids.

But it had never been clear whether it was the omega-3 fatty acids in their diet or differences in their genetic make up that were protecting the Japanese men.

So Dr. Akira Sekikawa and colleagues at the University of Pittsburgh School of Public Health undertook a study to determine the cause of the remarkably lower incidence of heart disease among Japanese men (The study was published in the August 5, 2008 issue of Journal of the American College of Cardiology).

The study enrolled 868 randomly selected men aged 40 to 49. Of these, 281 were Japanese men from Kusatsu, Shiga, Japan; 306 were white men from Allegheny County, Pennsylvania; and 281 were third- or fourth-generation Japanese-American men from Honolulu, Hawaii.

As previous studies had shown, all three groups of men had similar blood cholesterol and blood pressure readings and similar rates of diabetes.

However, the Japanese men consumed an average of 3.75 ounces of fish every day while men in the United States typically consumed that much fish only once or twice a week.

Putting it another way, the Japanese men were consuming an average of 1.3 grams of omega-3 fatty acids a day while the Japanese-American and Caucasian-American men were consuming only 0.2 grams of omega-3 fatty acids a day. And this resulted in a significant difference in blood levels of omega-3 fatty acids.

Japanese men had twice the level of omega-3 fatty acids in their blood than either Japanese-American or Caucasian-American men.

Dr. Sekikawa and his colleagues went on to quantify two markers of atherosclerosis. In the first test, ultrasound waves were used to gauge the thickness of the walls of the carotid arteries in the neck, a test known as intimal-medial thickness (IMT). In the second test, an electron-beam CT scanner measured calcium deposits in the arteries of the heart, a test known as coronary artery calcification (CAC).

Both tests showed that the Japanese men had significantly lower levels of atherosclerosis than either Japanese-American or Caucasian-American men.

Because of the way the study was designed it was clear that the differences in atherosclerosis (which is directly related to heart attack risk) could not be explained by genetics or standard risk factors.

The only difference between the three groups of men that actually correlated with the different degree of atherosclerosis was the omega-3 fatty acids in the diet and in the bloodstream.

Of course, I don't need to tell you that the results of this study were no surprise. It confirms what many other studies have told us over the past few years - namely that omega-3 fatty acids significantly reduce the risk of heart disease.

And until the contamination of fish - especially farm raised salmon - with PCBs and heavy metals has been resolved, my recommendation is that you get your omega-3 fatty acids from a high quality, ultra-pure omega-3 supplement.

To Your Health!

Dr. Stephen G Chaney

P.S. Shaklee supplements are my personal recommendation because Shaklee insists on rigorous quality control tests on every one of their ingredients and on their finished products. For example, they import ultra pure, triple distilled fish oil from England and test it for PCB contamination after they receive it. They also have published over 70 clinical studies on their products in peer-reviewed scientific journals. They are unique in the industry.



While the American Heart Association recommends that we eat two servings of fish rich in omega-3 fatty acids every week, most people only eat fish three times per month. Moreover, there are growing concerns about unsafe levels of contaminants like mercury and lead that are now commonly found in fish.

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